

Members

Rep. David Niezgodski, Chairperson
Rep. Earl Harris
Rep. Scott Pelath
Rep. Don Lehe
Rep. Thomas Dermody
Rep. Ed Soliday
Sen. Sue Landske, Vice-Chairperson
Sen. Ed Charbonneau
Sen. Marvin Riegsecker
Sen. James Arnold
Sen. Frank Mrvan
Sen. Earline Rogers
Stanley Dobosz
James Pettit



NORTHWEST INDIANA TRANSPORTATION STUDY COMMISSION

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MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: October 30, 2007
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: 6625 Boundary Drive, Burns Harbor
Meeting City: Portage, Indiana
Meeting Number: 3

Members Present: Rep. David Niezgodski, Chairperson; Rep. Earl Harris; Rep. Ed Soliday; Sen. Ed Charbonneau; Sen. James Arnold; Sen. Earline Rogers; Stanley Dobosz.

Members Absent: Rep. Scott Pelath; Rep. Don Lehe; Rep. Thomas Dermody; Sen. Sue Landske, Vice-Chairperson; Sen. Marvin Riegsecker; Sen. Frank Mrvan; James Pettit.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

1. Jody Peacock, Director of Corporate Affairs, Port of Indiana

Mr. Peacock provided an overview of the Ports of Indiana through a slide presentation (See Exhibit A.). In response to a question, Mr. Peacock commented that in 2003, legislation was passed expanding the authority of the ports, based on the Cleveland and Toledo Port Authorities. This included lease financing. Mr. Peacock told the Commission that intermodal development allows involvement in transportation all over the state. Responding to a question, Mr. Peacock said that, in terms of economic potential, the Port Commission is well staffed to be effective.

2. Joseph Bell, Indiana Department of Homeland Security

Mr. Bell discussed the role of the Midwestern Council of State Governments' Radioactive Materials Committee in helping Indiana deal with radioactive materials transport issues . Mr.

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.in.gov/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

Bell's presentation is contained in Exhibit B (CSG.s Midwestern Radioactive Materials Transportation Project). In addition, Mr. Bell distributed Exhibit C (Transport of Radioactive Materials), along with Exhibit D (Sensible Tools Handbook for Indiana). Mr. Bell told the Commission that whenever a movement of radioactive materials is made, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security and the Indiana State Police are notified. Mr. Bell said that the information about the movement of radioactive materials is, at times, kept a secret for security reasons. He said that routes are determined by taking into account population, weather, track conditions, and time and distance issues.

3. Daryl Lampkins, General Manager, Gary Public Transportation Corporation (GPTC)

Mr. Lampkins' presentation is contained in Exhibit E (Gary Public Transportation Corporation High - Risk Status Report). In response to a Commission question regarding Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO), Mr. Lampkins said that he did not know why they decided to pull out of the original contract. Mr. Lampkins said he could find no documentation on the subject. He said that he could speculate that the pilot program probably became too costly for NIPSCO.

Commenting about support for public transportation, Mr. Lampkins said that Indiana is below par for funding public transit. Mr. Lampkins also said that the GPTC is for regional transit. He said that the GPTC must be prudent and that they don't want to break down without the ability to maintain services. Mr. Lampkins said that the Regional Development Authority (RDA) does not have a long-term funding plan for the operation of a bus system.

Responding to a Commission question, Mr. Lampkins said that the GPTC is into Plan B, now looking to Plan C. He said that he did not anticipate the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) would stop funding the GPTC. He said that this damaged the GPTC's credit rating. Mr. Lampkins said that tax revenues should help the GPTC's credit standing. Mr. Lampkins said that the GPTC must find new revenue sources going forward.

4. Dennis Rittenmeyer, President, Regional Bus Authority (RBA)

Mr. Rittenmeyer distributed a folder to members and the staff (Exhibit F). The contents of Exhibit F were copies of the RBA newsletter, along with a two-year, \$6.5 M investment plan for the RDA to implement. Mr. Rittenmeyer outlined the history of regional transportation in Northwest Indiana as the following.

1982-1999	No work on regional transportation
2001	Regional Transportation Authority (RTA)
2004	Regional Development Authority renames RTA to RBA
2006	\$500,000 leveraged federal money \$125,000 local match for a bus service study Porter County joins RBA LaPorte County joins RBA
2007	Spring of 2007 application for demonstration grants to the RDA

Mr. Rittenmeyer joined Mr. Lampkins in his assessment of Indiana funding for public transit. He said the RBA has no dedicated funding and this is the reason for nine local bus systems. Mr. Rittenmeyer said that the RBA has \$6.5 M from the RDA for demonstration programs. Continuing, Mr. Rittenmeyer said that even if these programs are wildly successful, the programs will stop in 2010 because RDA does not provide operational funding.

5. Ken Dallmeyer, Project Manager, RBA

Mr. Dallmeyer reviewed the "Overall Proposal" in Exhibit F. Mr. Dallmeyer said that the regional dispatch system is a demand response system and the RBA would like to expand to fixed route systems with locator technology and communications.

Responding to a Commission question, Mr. Rittenmeyer said that he sees the need for rail and buses to be coordinated and rail and bus service integrated into a coordinated system. He said that the Westlake expansion has its virtues, but people need service today. Commenting further, Mr. Rittenmeyer said that part of our proposal is to provide service in Westlake corridor until the NICTD line is up and running. Mr. Rittenmeyer told the Commission that the RBA does not enjoy designated recipient status of the FTA. Mr. Rittenmeyer said that technical expertise is an issue with bus service.

Commenting on a Commission question, Mr. Rittenmeyer said that subsidization of certain routes would move the ball forward for regional bus service. Regarding a move into LaPorte, Mr. Rittenmeyer said that they remain in conversation, but have not been able to get all the parties together. In further discussion about Westlake, Mr. Rittenmeyer said that there are two components to Westlake - capital funding and a 50% match. Closing his comments, Mr. Rittenmeyer said that the RBA has always supported rail service.

6. John Swanson, Executive Director, Northwestern Indiana Regional Planning Commission (NIRPC)

Mr. Swanson's presentation is contained in Exhibit G (Report to the Northwest Indiana Transportation Study Commission). The presentation highlighted highway issues and opportunities, along with transit issues and opportunities. The presentation also included non-motorized issues and opportunities.

In response to a Commission question, Mr. Swanson said that invariably all public transit is subsidized. Commission member Soliday commented that the key to commerce is transportation infrastructure and all transportation is subsidized. Commenting further, Commission member Soliday asked if we have the right structure and if we need an overall Northwest Transportation Authority. He urged all parties to think long term. He said the RTA in Chicago was formed because of conflicts among different services.

In response to a question from the public, Mr. Swanson said that the Miller station on the NICTD route will be eliminated. He also said that the I-65 station has not been submitted to NIRPC.

The Chair thanked Commission members for their service and adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.